



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 - 3pm**

In attendance: 32

Welcome to all in attendance.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Derek Swan, Treasurer and Audrey Pegrum, Bookings Secretary
2. **2023 AGM MINUTES** were approved, with one small amendment to the bookings numbers. No other matters arising.
3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

It's been another challenging year for the Village Hall.

We cancelled two events this year the Christmas Bazaar and the Music Festival mainly due to the lack of forthcoming volunteers as these events require some work. This was a shame, and we are hopeful people will come forward to assist events this year. If you wish to volunteer even just for events, please come and speak with me or Carol after the AGM.

However, on a positive note we did successfully run the St George's Day Breakfast and made a profit even though numbers were lower than last year, the assumption of less people was believed to be down to the weather as it rained heavy all day that day.

A great quiz night was run by the dance group which was very successful with all tables booked and hopefully this is the start of something as the Cub Group are now advertising for their quiz night in March, I believe there is a poster on the "Not so secret Ramsden" page on Facebook.

There have been some resignations from the committee with Tony Rogers stepping down as Vice Chairman and Derek Swan as Treasurer. I would like to personally thank them both along with the rest of the committee and the village for all their support over many years supporting and serving on the committee. Should anyone wish to come forward for these roles please contact me or Carol. Derek has very kindly offered to support the village hall until a replacement is found.

The Charity Commission states that anything earned over £25,000 we have to have audited or third party firm accountants. We would like to nominate IMF Coult & Co in Chelmsford as our accountants for the village hall – all voted in.

Looking to the future for the village hall we would like to integrate some changes this year and we have started to look at new ways of accounting, we are researching the introduction of a new bank account being online making it more manageable and accessible. This will also really benefit in terms of our deposits and payments to suppliers as we want as many payments online as possible avoiding cash payments where we can.

To support our Bookings Secretary and relieve some of the pressure we are going to be undertaking a trial of an online booking system. This in no way is a replacement of a person and is merely to support and run alongside, as the system would be able to produce invoices for bookings as well as providing us with statistics, we can use to ensure the village hall is charging the correct rates and utilising the halls as much as possible. The trial is completely free, and we have no obligation to sign up. If we do decide to use the system, it is extremely cost effective. Automated booking system offers a 10-week free trial period and is called Hallbookingonline.com. It was asked about who would hold the keys for village hall and a suggestion would be a locked box outside with a code.

## **Works**

We have finalised the WIFI install now which covers both halls and there are two signing codes, one is for the committee and the other is for guests.

All the equipment requiring certification has now been completed this includes the Gas Heating, Electrical Systems, Fire Alarm System and all the fire extinguishers have been checked and are up to date. The final certification for completion is for food storage which we are in conversations with Basildon Council. Notified that the pre-school closed due to lack of children. It was pre-school that needed the food storage.

## **Bin Gate**

A few people in the village decided that the village hall bin was better than the council collections and filled it up. Basildon Council kindly emptied the bin and we now lock it and put signs up as it was a massive disruption for parties.

We are awaiting costs from contractor's regarding the surface water drainage in the car park to change the covers. Also, we are exploring the possibilities of Grants for property upgrades needed such as the main doors on the old hall, painting the interior of the old hall and many more.

## **One last item**

We would like to pay thanks to The Parish Council who generously paid for a Christmas Tree and lighting this year. The Village Hall organised the install and we had the Cubs turn the lights on and the Dance Group supplied hot drinks and mince pies free of charge.

We hope to make this a regular event now and have had requests to make it a more of a Christmas themed night. All ideas are always welcome in how we can support the community with the village hall, and you can always speak to myself or any of the Committee members to put these ideas forward for you.

We would very much like to focus on growing the community spirit of the village hall over the next year and as mentioned by Jamie it would be great if you can support or volunteer to ensure we continuously provide great events, and the hall remains current and in a good state of repair. Personally, I look forward to another year at the village hall and hope that I can continue to give to this community as much as my free time allows me and look forward to working with the current and any new committee members in the future.

## **4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

All the other committee members have agreed to continue for another year. There were no votes against this committee, they were all elected unanimously.

## **5. HISTORY OF RAMSDEN**

This is the next hall event to take place on last weekend of February, 2 – 5pm on Saturday and Sunday 11 -5 pm. Steve Tuff gave a brief overview. It used to be run by Isabel who has had a lifelong passion for the history of the village. She retired in 2017 and a small group of volunteers are now responsible. The exhibition is supported by Basildon Heritage and Wickford Community Archive. Printing facilities will be available, or material can be emailed to people who are interested. Refreshments will be available. Entry is free of charge, but donations will be welcome.

## **6. VILLAGE HALL SUPPORTED CHARITY**

The Chairman presented a cheque for £1,744.12 awarded to last year's charity, **BILLERICAY FOOD BANK**.

Gail Carpenter thanked all who have contributed to the Food Bank and said the money is very welcome to help keep the flow of food continuing.

The Chairman stated that, as the Village Hall is in need of funds, it is proposed To adopt **RAMSDEN BELLHOUSE VILLAGE HALL** as the nominated charity for the coming year. This was then voted by a show of hands and unanimously agreed.

The meeting closed at 3:45pm, followed by refreshments and time for a chat.